

# Wild Horse and Burro



Issue 2

Official Newsletter of the National Wild Horse and Burro Program

Spring 2006

## IN THIS ISSUE

[Click here to download newsletter in PDF format](#)

[Bella and Me](#)

[It's All in the Eye](#)

[BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off](#)

[Daniel and Dodger](#)

[Gene Glasscock Finishes His Journey](#)

[The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States](#)

[Moving Further](#)

[New York's "Mustang Lady"](#)

[My Mustang History](#)

[Sunny](#)

[Wild Horse Slated for Home in Australia](#)

[Testimonials](#)

Sally Spencer, Marketing Director  
Janet Neal, Editor  
Ted Bailey, Art Director

*If you would like to submit articles for the Wild Horse and Burro News, please e-mail articles and photos (at least 300 dpi) to [Janet.Neal@blm.gov](mailto:Janet.Neal@blm.gov) or mail to Janet Neal, Bureau of Land Management, P.O. Box 12000, Reno, NV 89520, Phone 775-861-6614.*



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Wild Horse and Burro Program

## Article Links

[Bella and Me](#)

[It's All in the Eye](#)

[BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off](#)

[Daniel and Dodger](#)

[Gene Glasscock Finishes His Journey](#)

[The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States](#)

[Moving Further](#)

[New York's "Mustang Lady"](#)

[My Mustang History](#)

[Sunny](#)

[Wild Horse Slated for Home In Australia](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[HOME](#)

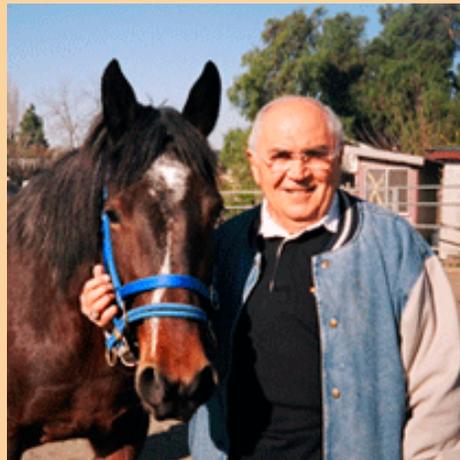
## Bella and Me

By Tony Mangan,

California Wild Horse and Burro Volunteer



**Like most little boys**, I've had a love affair with horses for as long as I can remember. I went to military school from my ninth birthday until I was 14. The whole lure, and the reason why I agreed to go, was because in their brochure they had pictures of young cadets on horseback. After I had been left there on a Sunday evening and settled into my dorm room, it is nearly impossible to describe my disappointment when I discovered that the school no longer kept horses due to high insurance costs. I was a broken-hearted nine-year-old!



I muddled through for five years with intermittent pangs of disappointment and made due with a bike. During those years my dreams of horses were to be satisfied only in the books that I read and on the reams of drawing paper I filled with pictures of horses running down paths or around racetracks. My passion was fiery!

Time passed by, I married, had a child, and life went on. I became competitive in business and lost my compass of horse ownership and all of those boyhood dreams. As I became somewhat successful in the business world I picked up my dream and began to envision it as a plan for when I retired to a little ranch with room for a few beautiful horses.

**One Thursday morning**, when I was a boy of 65 and still working, my wife phoned me and said that she had just heard on the radio that there would be a wild mustang adoption in a town close by and that the next day was preview day. She thought I would be well-served to go and have a look at the horses. I mumbled something about trying to make the time and promptly forgot about it while focusing my attention on the needs of the moment. The next morning my wife reminded me that this was preview day for the mustangs. Since I had said for more than a year now that perhaps I would be interested in adopting a mustang and training it myself, that this was the time to take some action – or else!

My business partner was in town so I asked him if he would like to come with me. We arrived just ahead of the horses' arrival. I must say the vision was dramatic. Horses came charging out of stock trailers and were handled and directed into holding pens by wranglers on horseback who seemed so at home with this process which was to me, as in a dream. There was the pounding of hooves, the raising of dust and the clanging of gates and the wild horses shouldering fences as they were neatly divided into groups and driven into the holding pens.

The experience was great fun and my partner and I enjoyed it tremendously. We stayed until all of the horses arrived and were sorted into pens and then we left and went back to the office. My wife called in the afternoon eager for the details about the experience. I couldn't in my wildest dreams have thought it would be of interest to anyone but me, but she was determined to help me fulfill my dream.

My wife insisted that we go to the adoption the next day. It was a much calmer environment that morning! When I began walking around the pens and looking for a horse I might be interested in, I spotted a mare among the 80 or 90 horses that were there. I liked the look of her and I really liked her eyes. We spent an hour or so watching and then the bidding began. I chose this mare as a possibility and by the close of the adoption I had succeeded in getting my "Bella." We hired a transporter to bring her to the boarding ranch where we were to keep her and after a mini-version of the hullabaloo of the

Friday unloading of the mustangs, Bella was in her paddock.

She stood in the center practically measuring the equal distance from the four sides that enclosed it. She stood smack in the middle and would not move. We were advised to leave her alone so that she could calm down and get used to her new home. We took the advice and left for the day.

**The next day we went back to the ranch.** We went directly to Bella's paddock and there she stood in the same spot where we had left her the night before, only now she looked more nervous and a bit forlorn. One of the borders came to us and said that he had been there since early morning and Bella had not moved from that spot except to kick over two buckets of water that he had brought to her.

I asked to borrow the bucket, filled it with water and then asked my wife to open the gate and let me into the pen, close it and lock it behind me and not to worry, I would surely scramble out of there if things went wrong. I hoisted the bucket onto my beltline and held the rim so that it would stay in place. Bella walked cautiously toward me and stretched her neck in the direction of the bucket while keeping her eyes locked onto mine. She snorted at the water and cautiously reached in further and began to drink. Her whole demeanor seemed to have changed and for a moment she actually seemed to relax a bit. I touched the side of her face with my thumbs and that was our first actual contact. I was smitten.

After that first day I went back every day (seven days a week) and often could do nothing but stand inside her paddock offering her little wads of hay folded into stalks about as long as a carrot in order to keep her calm and show my friendship. We met like that every day for a month or so, and then one day I actually touched her face! I would talk to her in soft tones and any time she got spooked or became agitated I would back away and speak to her in that soft singsong voice that would somehow communicate to her that she had nothing to fear. After two or three weeks of that gentling behavior, I began to take hold of the rope that dangled from beneath her halter and lead her around the paddock and stall. By the end of the second month, I began closing the doors at either end of the 24-stall barn and led Bella into the aisle. After a week of barn aisle-walking, I started leaving the barn doors open enough for her to look out as we walked from one end to the other. By mid-December, I sensed a great deal of trust from Bella and I began to feel sincere love for this great horse.

The first time I took her through the barn door and onto the dirt road that winds through the ranch she stopped and remained frozen in time for a full minute, looking around and getting a feel for this wide open space. I was standing very still with my pulse racing as I wondered if she would decide to jerk away and take off for distant places. When I felt that too much decision time had been spent, I gave the lead line a gentle tug and moved out. Bella followed with the same trusting step that she had given me in our barn walks.

Our first day in the round pen was awesome! Bella pranced around the perimeter of the round pen and watched me encouraging her. She was full of energy. She soon began to break into a gallop and was kicking up her heels with a sense of freedom as opposed to one of defense. I loved every moment of this activity and the idea that I might just be able to bond with her before this session was over. Bond with her I did. During that hour-long session, Bella began to slow to the calmness of my voice and pick up the pace when I showed some excitement. She would stop as I stepped toward her and she would turn to face me. I started walking toward her and petting her brow and sides of her face and she found that by following me I did not push her to work, so she concluded that following me around was a good idea!

As time went by, my relationship with this beautiful mustang, who everyone agrees is part draft horse, began to grow stronger and much more personal. She was letting me pick up her feet and bathe her and actually treat her like a pampered well-loved pet. Our days in the round pen got more and more productive. I would stand alongside Bella and put my hands on her withers and kind of jump up and down as if I were going to try to get on her back. When she got used to that, I bought a three-step mounting block and started standing her alongside of it as I slowly climbed the three steps. A few days of that and I began leaning on her back with my forearms and soon was lying across her back, belly down. She would try to walk away from the dead man's mount and I would just slide off and bring her back to the mounting block and start over. After some time spent with the pressure on her back, I decided on a



brisk morning that today was the day, and, tying her lead rope to her halter like reins, I slipped a leg over her back and waited with an anxious heart for her to bolt. Instead, she just walked away with me on her as if we had been doing this for years.

**The rest is history!** Now, we ride up in the rolling east hills of Milpitas - up and down the trails and along the narrow paths. Although we have had a mishap or two, it has been such a pleasurable experience. I am 66 years old and have done pretty much anything I put my mind to, but this has been the most rewarding thing I have ever experienced. I think everyone who has the desire to have a horse, needs to adopt a mustang and make a bridge between the world of wild horse and mankind.

From being involved with Bella, I have learned something about myself. That is, that the patience and kindness that dwell within are invaluable and have given me the success that means so much to me. I have made a long journey from my childhood dream to my present joyous reality. I am grateful for having Bella. Beautiful, beautiful Bella.

---

[Top of page](#)

## Article Links

[Bella and Me](#)

[It's All in the Eye](#)

[BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off](#)

[Daniel and Dodger](#)

[Gene Glasscock Finishes His Journey](#)

[The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States](#)

[Moving Further](#)

[New York's "Mustang Lady"](#)

[My Mustang History](#)

[Sunny](#)

[Wild Horse Slated for Home In Austrailia](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[HOME](#)

## It's All in the Eye

*By Tony Mangan,  
California Wild Horse and Burro Volunteer*



Under the sunlit morning sky

We run and play, my horse and I,

Joyful, laughing, free of care,

Alive and well in the morning air.

Our hearts are filled with so much love,

Given to us from our God above.

In this endless playful childhood stream,

A boy and his horse live out their dream.

There's naught in this life they think can compare,

As the folks on the sidelines curiously stare

And see the real truth, "An Old Man and his Mare."

---

[Top of page](#)

## Article Links

[Bella and Me](#)

[It's All in the Eye](#)

[BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off](#)

[Daniel and Dodger](#)

[Gene Glasscock Finishes His Journey](#)

[The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States](#)

[Moving Further](#)

[New York's "Mustang Lady"](#)

[My Mustang History](#)

[Sunny](#)

[Wild Horse Slated for Home In Australia](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[HOME](#)

# BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off

By Janet Neal,  
WH&B Public Outreach Coordinator,  
BLM National Marketing Team



It has long been recognized that volunteers play a valuable role in the wild horse and burro (WH&B) program of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Not only are volunteers able to assist the BLM in certain aspects of the program, they provide a measurable success rate in ensuring more wild horse and burro adoptions are successful.

About one year ago, BLM-California began a Volunteer Pilot Project. The goal of the Project is to develop, implement, and evaluate the processes necessary to expand volunteer participation in the wild horse and burro program, increase the number of successful adoptions, reduce program expenses and increase public ownership in a successful adoption program.

The Project will be in development for approximately two years. The first year of the project was primarily devoted to the growth, coordination, and implementation of expanded usage of volunteers in California's WH&B program. The second year of the project will entail evaluating the processes, effectiveness, and exportability to other BLM offices. The Project is being organized and coordinated by the National WH&B Public Outreach Coordinator with the assistance of the California WH&B Program Manager.



*Steve Levine, CA BLM volunteer with special needs mustang, "Rocky Balboa."*

Several different aspects were identified where volunteers could be used more extensively and effectively in the program. These areas include: adoption events, promoting the Adopt a Wild Horse or Burro Program, compliance inspections, assisting at BLM facilities, Adopter's Assistants, enhancing the adoptability of certain mustangs, and activities on the range.

Volunteers have assisted in all of the pre-identified areas of the Project, from posting flyers about adoption events to conducting additional compliance inspections. Most effective has been the use of volunteers enhancing the adoptability of certain mustangs and the Adopter's Assistants program.

The enhancing-adoptability portion of the Project requires that the mustangs have been to at least one temporary adoption location or one scheduled facility adoption and have not been successfully adopted. Volunteers are responsible for training the mustangs to lead, be easily caught and haltered, have all four feet picked up and worked on, plus being able to be easily loaded into a BLM-approved trailer. Volunteers are reimbursed for feed, farrier and veterinary care. Specific timeframes and reimbursement limits apply.

The Adopter's Assistants area of the Project is primarily to provide assistance, encouragement and information about resources available to novice wild horse and burro adopters. Often, new wild horse

and burro adopters can be overwhelmed with the animal's wildness and don't know where to begin with gaining the animal's trust. California's Adopter's Assistants are there for the new adopter. They can provide helpful information, from simple things such as allowing the animal time to adjust to its new surroundings to more complex issues such as how to move an untrained wild horse or burro from one pen to another or where to seek veterinary and farrier care in their area.

Since the inception of the California Volunteer Pilot Project, more than 170 new WH&B volunteers have signed up to promote the program, assist other adopters, help BLM staff, and to help the animals they dearly love, America's Mustangs and Burros.

If you are interested in volunteering for the BLM's WH&B program, please contact your local BLM office. Following is a list of BLM servicing offices and contact information.

Arizona – Kelly Grissom – (602) 417-9441

California – Janet Neal – (775) 861-6614 or Tom Pogacnik (916) 978-4637

Colorado – Fran Ackley – (719) 269-8511

Eastern States – Karen Malloy – (703) 440-1592

Idaho – Tom Miles – (208) 373-3804

Montana, South and North Dakota – Linda Coates-Markle (406) 896-5223

Nevada – Suzie Stokke – (775) 861-6469

New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas – Bob Mitchell – (405) 790-1045

Oregon – Gary McFadden - (541) 573-4492

Utah – Gus Warr – (801) 539-4057

Wyoming – Alan Shepard – (307) 775-6097



*Reona Miller with mustang "Kate" on day 4 of halter training.*

---

[Top of page](#)

## Article Links

[Bella and Me](#)

[It's All in the Eye](#)

[BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off](#)

[Daniel and Dodger](#)

[Gene Glasscock Finishes His Journey](#)

[The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States](#)

[Moving Further](#)

[New York's "Mustang Lady"](#)

[My Mustang History](#)

[Sunny](#)

[Wild Horse Slated for Home In Australia](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[HOME](#)

## Daniel and Dodger

By Heidi Bylsma,  
Wild Horse Adopter



*Daniel and Dodger have a special relationship.*

Good partnerships are born, not made—or such seems to be the case with our mustang Dodger, and Daniel, our autistic son.

Our family moved to the country in 2002 to experience nature from horseback. We planned to get a horse for each of us.

When my ten year old son, Daniel, heard that our newest acquisition might be a *mustang*, he boldly stated that the new horse would be *his*. His announcement surprised us, as a recent experience on a runaway horse had all but smothered Daniel's love for equines.

Gathered by the BLM in 1991 as a four-year-old, Dodger was one of the mustangs selected for the inmate program at a California correctional facility.

Eleven years had passed since Dodger had left the care of the BLM. With our purchase not yet sealed, we observed him from a distance. We evaluated the ramifications of welcoming this horse into our newly forming herd. Among other things, we were informed that he would run when approached with a halter and had issues with being ridden. *This* was the horse to help our son regain his *confidence*?

Daniel slipped unseen through the fence rails; halter in hand, introduced himself to his new friend, and triumphantly led him over to meet us. Later, Dodger relished a carrot Daniel offered despite warnings that he would refuse food offered by a human.

At home, as we became acquainted, Dodger's behavior confirmed the story told by the physical scars on his body. Expecting the worst, our mustang, eyes vacant, trembled when being handled.

When Daniel handled Dodger, however, he was a different horse. Dodger welcomed Daniel into his world. That which "normal" society overlooked, Dodger relished with utter abandon—the company of a

boy that was “different.”

Content to brush his pony or tenderly to care for his hoofs without the benefits of halter and lead rope, the two basked in the pleasure of one another’s company.

Dodger often followed Daniel through the forested hillside pasture perhaps gaining comfort and camaraderie from the presence of this special boy.

The relationship these two enjoy is, perhaps, best illustrated by something that happened one summer morning. Not one typically to defy the rules in our house about riding without an adult present, Daniel climbed onto the feeder. Outfitted with only a halter and lead rope, Dodger sided up and invited Daniel to hop aboard. Not willing to refuse so gracious an offer and convinced that Dodger would take care of him, the two promenaded around our corral like a natural horseman and his partner should. With this amazing mustang as his instructor, Daniel overcame his fear of riding.

Dodger has come to trust humans again because of the unconditional love extended to him by a young autistic boy who wanted his friendship and companionship and asked for nothing more. Because of this unique mustang, my son has been changed forever, infused with a confidence provided only by a special relationship of which so many of us who love horses can only dream.



---

[Top of page](#)

## Article Links

[Bella and Me](#)

[It's All in the Eye](#)

[BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off](#)

[Daniel and Dodger](#)

[Gene Glasscock Finishes His Journey](#)

[The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States](#)

[Moving Further](#)

[New York's "Mustang Lady"](#)

[My Mustang History](#)

[Sunny](#)

[Wild Horse Slated for Home In Australia](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[HOME](#)

# Gene Glasscock Finishes His Cross Country Journey

By Marge Davis, Delmarva Chapter of the American Mustang and Burro Association, Inc., Secretary, Editor



CountryScapes Photo

## Gene and wild horse Tosi

and snow. Sure enough, when he walked up the Capitol steps it started to snow. Just flurries—but it was snow!

There was a reception in the Capitol for the entire group and later in the afternoon, after the horses had been returned to the staging area and cared for, everyone was invited to Westminster-Thurber Retirement Village, where Gene spoke to 100 or more residents about his ride and encouraged all senior citizens to follow their dreams. We were all treated to a private supper at the retirement village.

Gene left Ohio to spend a few days with his webmaster, Gayle Gerber, in New Jersey, after which he was going to spend some time in Arizona. Gayle is the new owner of the Mustang "Buddy" ridden by Gene throughout his trip, while Kelly Powers of Pennsylvania now owns the mustang "Tosi." Frank and George went to a therapeutic riding ranch in Arizona.

Gene plans to write a book about his trip and then return to Paraguay and continue teaching the less fortunate. He visited every state capital in the contiguous U.S. and the entire trip took 3 years 3 months and 2 weeks of continuous horseback riding, except for a brief period of time in California when Gene

In 2002, Gene Glasscock set out on his "Long visits to 48 state capitals. Glasscock successfully ended his long ride on December 1, 2005 in Columbus, Ohio. He was met by a contingent of friends, colleagues and fellow Long Riders before his last ride to the state Capitol Building. Mark and Marge Davis were there to greet him on November 30, 2005. On that day he met with the Mayor of Columbus and was also interviewed by a local radio station.

On the morning of December 1, a group gathered at the staging area in a park a short distance away from the State Capitol Building. There were people there from Ohio, Iowa, Texas, Arizona, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. Two of the people in attendance were fellow Long Riders. Horses were groomed, saddled and many rode with Gene to the Capitol. A couple from Iowa brought their two Percherons and a carriage. There were two mounted city policemen who escorted the group and they told us that, except for the mounted patrol, horses had never been permitted downtown before.

Gene met with the governor and according to Gene's custom; he was able to convince Governor Taft to mount his horse, Frank. Gene had been hoping for cold weather

was hospitalized for pneumonia.

It was with both sadness and joy that Gene came to the end of the trail. He says he will miss all the wonderful people he met but he was ready to stop. He remains a great example of courage, endurance and determination.

---

[Top of page](#)

## Article Links

[Bella and Me](#)

[It's All in the Eye](#)

[BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off](#)

[Daniel and Dodger](#)

[Gene Glasscock Finishes His Journey](#)

[The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States](#)

[Moving Further](#)

[New York's "Mustang Lady"](#)

[My Mustang History](#)

[Sunny](#)

[Wild Horse Slated for Home In Australia](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[HOME](#)

# The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States

By Bill Davenport,  
BLM Public Affairs Specialist,  
Eastern States



Some folks have all the luck! This is a story of two wild horses that are successfully showing what the American "Living Legend" can do. This is the story of "Haiku" and "Eeyour" who have seized the moment.

In 2001, "Haiku" (a Japanese verse form that relies on brevity and simplicity to convey its message) was adopted by the Hellner family from Avon, CT and quickly became a member of the family. She came into a family that had an absolute love of horses but had never had the opportunity to have a horse until they were in their late thirties.

"We, my husband, son, and myself, quickly realized that in addition to becoming good riders we wanted to become good horse people, we wanted a real hands on approach," said Ms. Ricki Hellner. Thus, when they went to an adoption in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Ms. Hellner said "we encountered a new world." There they saw a demonstration that illustrated the absolute trust that could be developed between a horse and man that cemented their feelings. Later that summer they made their way to Cornell University, where they met #3300. She was a 17-month-old filly from the untamed Granite Range of Nevada. "She looked like a Japanese watercolor. Bold, simple yet elegant lines, wild mane, large wondering eyes," said Ricki. "She stood in the back of her small group; lifting her head above another's back, just slightly, to peer out at all those people beyond the bars. Never quite letting on that she was, indeed interested," Hellner said.

The Hellner family have now gentled and trained Haiku, and their 11-year-old son, Austin, has begun showing her in the Hunter/Jumper world. They find it amazing that an 11-year-old boy and a 5-year-old mustang can do what they are doing together.



*Austin on wild horse Haiku.*

"The mutual confidence together is a beautiful thing to watch," said Ms. Hellner. "Perpetually, here in New England, Haiku is surrounded by "well pedigreed" horses yet her intelligence, generosity and spirit rise far above the other horses. Our lives have been enriched beyond measure. "Haiku has allowed us to become her "herd" and in doing so has given us a feeling like no other," Hellner said.

The Hellner family is looking forward to the upcoming show season for Austin and Haiku. "Who knows, maybe even the pony finals in Kentucky this year," said Ms. Hellner.

Our second "American Legend" lives a different sort of life. "Eeyour", a Riverton, Wyoming mustang is currently used for children's programs at the New River Trail State Park in Foster Falls, Virginia, and is being trained as a trail lead horse. Eeyour is a 5 year old gelding that arrived at the trail in February 2005. He got his name

from the park staff and their children because he has long ears and had a big orange nose. He looked like Eeyour from the children's story. He is very gentle and allows anyone to handle him.

The New River Trail State Park designated as an official National Recreation Trail by the U. S.

Department of the Interior parallels 39 miles of the New River, the second oldest river in the world and one of the few flowing north. New River Trail is just minutes from Claytor Lake State Park and Grayson Highlands State Park. This unique park features 57 miles of continuous multiple-use trail.

Eeyour, along with Brady, Gabe, and Hershy, come to the Virginia State Park system from the Riverton, Wyoming, Honor Farm, part of the Wyoming prison system, where inmates, as part of their rehabilitation, gentle the horses prior to them being adopted. "These horses help us provide a resource to the youth of the area that many might not ever have had the opportunity of experiencing," said Park Manager Mark Hufeisen. "This partnership with the Bureau of Land Management-Eastern States and the Virginia State Park System is the best of both worlds. An opportunity to find good homes for the "American Legends" and a resource for the State of Virginia, at a reasonable cost, which allows the youth of the area to have a unique equine experience utilizing the State Parks," Hufeisen said.

"Eeyour has proven to be a hit with the kids. He is very gentle and allows anyone to handle him. Eeyour is an exceptional horse and has taken well to working with children as well as working as a trail horse. He has the patience of a saint. The kids make mistakes, pull on the reins, do all the things that you shouldn't do, and he just puts up with it without raising a fuss. He is quite a remarkable horse," said Mark.

"He and Brady, a 2-year-old gelding mustang, are part of our America's Wild Horse program, which is a public program to introduce people to the mustangs and horsemanship in general. This year we had a one-day camp, and next year we plan to have a week-long camp for children as part of our junior ranger program," Mr. Hufeisen said.

"As manager, I have found the mustang to be very well suited for trail work and our goal is to have at least 6-8 mustangs trained for trail riding by the public. Gabe and Hershy are now in the process of being gentled and will also train as trail guide horses. All the trail mustangs are gentled and have had ground training to include saddle and bit. We use them for day programs and they are available for the public to see daily," said Mr. Hufeisen.



*Eoyour, the wild mustang, with a park ranger at the New River Trail State Park in Virginia.*

If you would like to join the Hellners, and Park Manager Hufeisen as partners with American's "Living Legends" and enjoy the opportunity and challenge to gentle and train a wild horse just call 866-4MUSTANGS or visit [www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov](http://www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov) to learn when and where an adoption is coming to a location close to you. You will never have a more loyal and trustworthy friend than your gentled mustang, the "American Legend."

[Top of page](#)

## Article Links

[Bella and Me](#)

[It's All in the Eye](#)

[BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off](#)

[Daniel and Dodger](#)

[Gene Glasscock Finishes His Journey](#)

[The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States](#)

[Moving Further](#)

[New York's "Mustang Lady"](#)

[My Mustang History](#)

[Sunny](#)

[Wild Horse Slated for Home In Australia](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[HOME](#)

## Moving Further

By Rob Pliskin,

California BLM Volunteer and Wild Horse Gentler



In the first article "It Depends," we talked about the four goals for your horse of directed movement, flex of the neck, loose feet, and connection or "feel" between your horse and you. We introduced three methods to work towards these goals: movement work in the round pen, poling, and rope work. Please use "It Depends" for review or for more background to this article. Visit <http://www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov/news/winter2005/depends.html> to view this article.

### MOVEMENT

Now let's get our horse to move in the direction we want. You do this by turning him either towards the rail or towards the inside of the round pen to change directions at your request. This connects you with the horse, literally, as his director.

From the center of the round pen, get the horse going easily in one direction, and pick a place on the rail where you want him to change direction. Several horse lengths before he gets there, step a little in that direction, essentially blocking his forward motion. Raise your front hand slightly. You want your body english to block his forward movement and turn his eye away, and towards the other direction, so it becomes his outside eye. This is a "turn towards the rail." It is harder for some horses, because they lose sight of you in the turn, which makes them vulnerable. If they resist or blow through your request, immediately set up for another try and be more firm. Having a lariat or cotton rope in your hands is helpful here. You can toss the rope as an extension of your blocking hand. Keep going at this until you get a successful turn. REMEMBER, as soon as you get a turn, Release! You will see your horse lick and chew in understanding when he is successful and YOU give him a release. You should try to stay as close to the center of the round pen and use as minimal a request as possible. Bump it up if you have to. Don't let the horse cheat in off the rail. But if there's a place where he does give himself a little more space, turning him there might help make the turn a little easier. Repeat going the other direction – Side Two. Don't expect it to be exactly the same. In further sessions, continue this work at different gaits, gaining smoothness and control.

Now the inside turn. Many horses do this naturally as a more defensive posture. It is a wheel towards you on the hinds: "I'm turning toward you, so I can keep my eye on you!" So we use a horse's natural behavior to become his leader by telling him when and how we want him to turn.

So get him going on the rail again. Ask for your turn when his eye is on you and/or his ear is cupped towards you. With some horses, they may actually be looking in to you and ready to try. Take a step or two in the forward direction like before. But this time, instead of blocking him with your front hand, open your front shoulder, that is, pull it back away from the horse, as you take a step or two away from him at the same time. Raise your front hand a little, and as you back away a step or two, hold your hand in a subtle inviting motion to bring his head in. As soon as his front legs start to swing in, direct him in the new direction with your other hand, lean that way, and ask him to move with the hand that invited him in. You may have to wait seconds, or many seconds, while he stops, and then looks or steps in. That's ok! Get him going again, and build on it. Release every time your horse is successful, and then ask for a little more. Reward the try. That is how he works, too. Again, bump up your request if you need to. Be ready to move if you have a quick, very afraid, or very challenging horse. Get out of the way if necessary and set up again, until you can get some success. Pass the test as his good and caring director, and he will be directed. Don't forget Side Two, an inside turn from the other direction.

When this works, he will *want* to follow you. The horse will look in to you, step in, and even start to "come up" to you. You can continue to back across the round pen in short steps and ask him to "come up" instead of directing him to the inside turn. "Coming up" is connecting for your horse and a trust step to successful catching and haltering.

## POLING

Use “It Depends” to review being touched all over by the pole. You now can use approach and release with the pole for the eventual goal of touching your horse, *but don't get in a hurry: You want to touch him on the INSIDE with respect and release, before you ever touch him on the outside.* So, take your time.

From the center of the pen, take up your neutral position even with his shoulder and start at the sweet spot with your pole. Don't stay still; keep your body active and your voice soft and normal. Move your feet. Decide how much closer up the pole you can move your hands without alarming the horse; maybe an inch, maybe 3 or 4. Slide your hands up while you are working the pole, and move your body and feet in, or just lean in with your upper body. Your horse will notice all of this. If he moves, keep the pole with him until he settles, and then when he stops and relaxes just the least bit, release! The goal is to do approach and release with your distance to the horse on the pole and anticipate how close you can get without having him move. One way to move in is to notice something in the dirt where you will move. You can even make a soft mark with your boot.

Eventually you will be within reaching distance of him. DON'T REACH! To him you are a cougar jumping on his back. WAIT until you are close enough for the *back* of your hand to naturally bump up against his sweet spot as you move the pole, because that is how close it is. Continue touching him in this way as part of the pole motion, until you can release the pole with that hand, and hold the pole with the hand closest to your body. You are now touching him with the pole and your hand. Play with this until you can touch him only with your hand. Don't forget to release. Don't tickle him lightly. You don't want to build up a static charge. Horses groom and rub each other with vigor. Talk nice. Release. Back off a step, come forward.

At some point you will go for two hands rubbing at once. This will prepare your horse to accept you being busy around him for haltering, for example. To get your second hand up there, move it slowly along the upper part of the front of your body. Then move down your arm that is rubbing the horse, bit by bit while the horse is comfortable, until you can bump it against the horse where your other hand is rubbing. Then you will have two hands on your horse. Step away and release. Watch your horse turn towards you, lick, and chew, and you'll know you are connecting. Your next goals here will be to work your rubbing onto different parts of the body and down the legs, step by step. Be safe and effective. Anticipate how far you can go and be in the comfort zone before releasing. Do Side Two.

## ROPE WORK

Continue with the work described in “It Depends” until you can get each end of the rope in one hand. Then flip and seesaw the rope back and forth around the horse's body, smoothly, from the center of the pen. If the horse bolts or struggles, keep the rope in contact until he stops. Then, Release! That way, he will learn to accept the rope, and to stop if he ever in his life gets tangled up in one! It's ok if your session goes western a time or two. Set it up so that you keep your hands on the ends of the rope and when he stops, he gets a release! The easiest way to do this is to think water skiing. Ask a water skier if you don't know what I mean. You have to keep enough “feel” in the rope so that it doesn't fall around the horse's feet and enough slack so that you are not binding the rope on the horse's body, giving him or you rope burns. If he moves, keep the “feel” without getting too slack. The easiest way to get the “feel” is to pick the ends of the rope up over your head, taking up slack while he is running around and you are in the middle of the pen waiting for him to stop. It is like a water skier lifting the line when he has too much slack between himself and the boat.

Having your horse easy with two hand touch and rope work prepares him for two important parts of gentling: haltering him and working with his feet. The video referenced at the end of this article is great for poling and rope work.

## HALTERING

Here is a brief introduction to haltering. I recommend a stiff rope halter. They are less noisy and shiny and they are better training aids. Knots are at points on the nose and poll that helps the horse learn. If you need to practice haltering to get handy with it, PLEASE for the sake of your horse and your gentling sessions, do it outside your sessions. Use another horse you can approach and halter, or something

besides your mustang.

Basically, you will be introducing a different kind of rope to the horse in a way that he is already used to.

Give him the grace to see this as new ground. It IS new ground to him. You should be reviewing with every session anyway. Go back and rework what is easy and comfortable with him, and then go forward. Show him your hand and let him smell it the way you showed him the pole and he smelled it. Then show him the wadded up halter and lead line the same way. Rub him with your hand, then rub him with the wadded up halter and lead line. Don't forget to release and reward when he accepts each little step. At some point start holding parts of the halter and lead rope so it slowly starts taking its shape. You will want to start planning how you are going to hold the halter to put it on. Get him used to that in micro-steps. Because of this work and what you did leading up to it, you will be teaching him to put his face in the halter without fear. This will happen by degrees and it can still get western, so let him go and come back to it until you can release to a success.

#### FOOT WORK

Do some work connected to gaining control of the feet in every session. This is for your horse's health (and yours) as well as his gentling. You can do this with the pole, rope, and eventually your hands.

Review pole work about the legs and feet from "It Depends".

Use approach and release going down the leg. Start with the pole; anticipate staying in the horse's comfort zone, and release while it is still and quiet. Make progress down the leg. Then do the rope work the same way, leg by leg. Dangle a rope when you are able to safely so that it contacts the legs as it dangles. Get creative, but always be able to release when the horse does well.

Get to the point where you can get a long enough rope to be safe around one of the horse's legs. You have an end in each hand. Then seesaw it back and forth down the leg bit by bit until he is comfortable with the rope around the fetlock. Then ask the horse to "pick it up" while giving several light pulses to the foot through the rope. If it doesn't work, pulse more firmly. If that doesn't work, pick the foot up a little and move it a few inches out from under the horse, to the side. Wait no more than a few seconds after your request. Don't forget your water skiing lesson if it gets western. Release and praise the horse if he moves his foot without bolting or shying. Give him a big release if he picks it up without a lot of pressure from the rope when you ask. If he appreciates being rubbed at this point, definitely rub him and reward him. You have three feet to go. All of them will be a little different. You are doing this with the rope because he knows the rope and for now it keeps you a lot safer.

#### IN CLOSING

- My teachers – I can't go any further without acknowledging the work of Jerry Tindell on movement for a horse, and John Sharp and his granddaughter Kitty Lauman for their work on poling and ropes. Thank you to my teachers.

- Check Tindell's website for his training videos, especially about movement. [www.jerrytindell.com](http://www.jerrytindell.com)

- A great video for poling and the rope is "From Wild to Willing" by Kitty and Rick Lauman of Lauman Training [www.laumantraining.com](http://www.laumantraining.com). Kitty's grandfather John Sharp pioneered the use of the bamboo pole in modern gentling, and has been doing it for 80 years himself.

- Ask Rob a question: Write to Rob at [robp9@yahoo.com](mailto:robp9@yahoo.com) with a gentling question or comments. He will try to answer it for you. The Newsletter will publish a question and its answer in every issue.

- Watch the BLM National Wild Horse and Burro Adoption schedule at [www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov](http://www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov). Find out if there are demonstrations at your area adoptions. View the demonstrations even if you are not adopting!

- Rob demonstrates gentling at southern California and other adoptions and workshops.

Finally, if you are within a 2-hour drive of Hesperia, CA, contact Rob to discuss forming a gentling group in your area. Rob can demonstrate the work and help you learn.



## Article Links

[Bella and Me](#)

[It's All in the Eye](#)

[BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off](#)

[Daniel and Dodger](#)

[Gene Glasscock Finishes His Journey](#)

[The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States](#)

[Moving Further](#)

[New York's "Mustang Lady"](#)

[My Mustang History](#)

[Sunny](#)

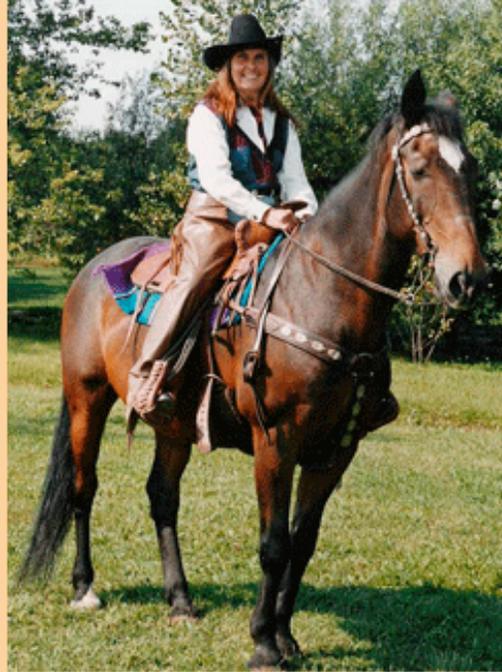
[Wild Horse Slated for Home In Australia](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[HOME](#)

# New York's "Mustang Lady" Promotes Wild Horses

By Avis Townsend, Appleton, New York



*Donna Richards on her mustang Cochise.*

Although Donna Richards lives in western New York, thousands of miles away from the rugged west where mustangs still run wild, she has been enamored by them for the past thirty-five years and she is now known as the "Mustang Lady" among the horseteinherarea.

"When I was just a kid, I loved reading story books about the mustangs, and I always wanted one," she said. In the 1980's she got her wish when she went in partnership with another horse woman who'd adopted a mustang from a Lewisbury, PA Bureau of Land Management (BLM) holding center. She asked Donna to train the horse, and Donna fell in be

Donna trained the mustang mare, Prairie Star, in true whisperer fashion – long before most people ever heard about horse whispering – and she knew she had to have more of these fabulous animals. Going back to the Pennsylvania center, she adopted Cimarron Sioux, then Nevada Red, and she trained

them also. Following that, she rescued Sundance and Cochise, who'd been adopted by others but not taken care of. Donna stepped in and saved them, and she's had them ever since.

Donna helped to bring three mustang adoptions to the Niagara County Cooperative Extension Center in Lockport, New York. She is proud that at each adoption all the mustangs were adopted. Donna became the local voice of the mustang, urging newspapers to do write-ups about them, and urging a local feature writer to attend a local adoption and write about it. That feature writer was this author, and I became so hooked on the mustangs that I adopted my own at the next BLM adoption event.

Donna helped me train Brandy, and she was the kindest, gentlest horse I've ever known.

All of Donna's horses have been titled by the BLM and registered by the American Indian Horse Registry. Donna has had all her horses' blood tested. They were shown to be descendants of the Spanish Barb except for Sioux, who was found to have Baskur Curly in her heritage.



*Allen Richards on Nevada Red*

Donna and her equines have been all over the Eastern United States and to Canada. She is eager to promote horse rescue in North America, and will talk to anyone who shows interest and tell them the heritage of her fine steeds.

While some may argue that the modern mustang is a mongrel, made up of abandoned horses left to roam the wilderness, Donna thinks that's a blessing. "No man interfered with their growth development. Mustangs have every breed of horse in them, which makes them the best horse in the world."

Donna trains horses for the Niagara County Sheriff's mounted division, doing spook proofing, training for terrorist attacks, practicing in parades and preparing for border patrols. "I teach them to withstand pressure, like fire trucks and police sirens. I train them to get used to music and stereo systems," she said. She and her husband are both members of the mounted division and both ride mustangs on patrol.

Donna and her horses Cochise and Red have entertained at the Kentucky Horse Park experience. She and others with mustangs met with Peter Stone, owner of Breyer, at the Bob Evans Ranch in Ohio and received honors and ribbons, and got a standing ovation for their performance.

Donna's friend from Canada, Sonja Fizner, performed musical dressage with Donna astride mustangs at the Kentucky Horse Park, with the horses "dancing" to a soundtrack Donna wrote called "Mustang." The music was performed by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and taped to play at the event. Donna had written the song as one of a series in honor of her late son, Donny, a star swimmer who was preparing for the Olympics at the time of his death, killed by a drunk driver. Donny was always an advocate of the mustangs and shared his mother's excitement for them.

Donna's proud of how well Red has adapted to all phases of riding; including English, western, dressage, hackney and vaulting (gymnastics on horseback).

Nowadays Donna spends most of her days in her large facility, taking care of her own horses and others that board with her. She gives riding lessons in her indoor arena, and always has time to stop and chat with visitors, especially happy to tell them the story of the mustangs. She has piles of articles and photos showing her work with the mustangs, and she hopes each article will encourage more people to investigate adopting a mustang.

Her other children, who are all grown, still help in her barn. Her daughter, Joelle, enjoys trail riding behind the barn, and she says mustangs are the best horse to take a trail ride on. "They're more sensible, more alert. They can sense wildlife but won't spook as easily as domesticated horses. They've seen it all on the range and they're used to wildlife."

Her son, Allen Jr., is shown in the book *The Wild Horse, An Adopter's Manual. How to Select, Train and Care for a Feral Horse*, by Barbara Eustis-Cross and Nancy Bowker. Allen's photo is on page 198 and was taken at a cavalry class event held in Ohio at the Bob Evans Ranch.

The caption says, "This former wild horse and his rider echo the hoof beats of yesterday." Donna hopes the hoof beats of yesterday will continue on through many tomorrows, so future generations can experience the thrill of adopting a wild horse from the public lands managed by the BLM.

---

[Top of page](#)

## Article Links

[Bella and Me](#)

[It's All in the Eye](#)

[BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off](#)

[Daniel and Dodger](#)

[Gene Glasscock Finishes His Journey](#)

[The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States](#)

[Moving Further](#)

[New York's "Mustang Lady"](#)

[My Mustang History](#)

[Sunny](#)

[Wild Horse Slated for Home In Australia](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[HOME](#)

## My Mustang History

By Doug Gorman,

California Wild Horse and Burro Volunteer



After starting our Mounted Police Unit in 1993, we found the availability of horses that could perform this type of work was very limited, and if these horses were available, their purchase price was far outside our budget.

In 1994, while searching for a way to find re-mounts for our unit, we came across an ad in a national magazine talking about mustangs. Believing mustangs might be our answer, we made contact with the Colorado Wild Horse Inmate Program in Canon City, Colorado.

The inmate program is operated by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Colorado Department of Corrections. The program uses inmates to gentle and train wild horses.



*Wyatt Gorman with a gray gelding mustang he halter-trained for adoption at a Ridgecrest, CA adoption.*

We spoke with the coordinator of the program, and he agreed to select two matching geldings to gentle and train them for our use. These horses had to be saddle trained and be able to handle large crowds, firearms, and had to be gentle for anybody to ride. Once our criteria were given to them, they began searching for our horses.

In October 1994, we were told that they had picked two sorrel geldings and had begun their training. In April 1995, we were invited to come to the facility in Canon City and work with our mustangs.

We spent a week at the facility working with our wild horses, helping the crew separate new horses for training and acting as out-riders for the new mustangs as they were taken on trail rides.

Once you experience this, there is no going back. I watched wild horses gentled by inmates in the morning, and in the afternoon, they were riding them on our daily trail rides around the facility. The ability of these horses to learn and react to humans in such a positive manner is unbelievable.

Later that week, we were taught how to track humans via horseback by the Department of Corrections crew. My mount excelled in this. The inmates that worked with our horses had named them the Cop Horses; Morgan, for Morgan Earp, and Doc, for Doc Holiday.

Usually inmates and Law Enforcement personnel don't get along with each other, but these mustangs threw that away. We were treated like part of the crew and were more than happy to reciprocate.

Upon returning home to California, we began to train with both horses, but due to an on-the-job injury, I was forced to stay down for almost a year. A year later, Morgan was one of the first mustangs to go through the California Mounted Officers basic Mounted Police Course.

As usual, he excelled at training, loved chasing people and a large plastic ball that he was able to push around with his nose. Unfortunately, later that week, I was forced to retire from the Police Department with a medical retirement.

To stay active, I joined a local mounted posse organization and used Morgan to provide security at rodeos, color guard in local parades, and search-and-rescue duties.

During this time, I became a real believer in these horses and began to preach to everybody I knew

about them. I began training horses for Law Enforcement and the general public. To do this, I would travel to local adoptions around southern California, and got to be known as the "Mustang Man," as I would adopt anything with a freeze brand.

I started going to Texas to purchase horses. The majority of these were mustangs from wild herds in New Mexico. I had very good luck with these horses, as they loved being pampered and taken care of and made excellent trail horses.

This brought us Homer, a 14.3 grulla mustang that we purchased from a rancher in Texas. Homer is a wild horse and was used to train work horses. Homer was sold to a posse member, who later had to sell him due to physical ailments. Since then Homer has been the mainstay at our ranch.

Every new horse brought home for trail training was taken out on the street with Homer, and people all over Norco, CA could see Homer in the drive-thru of a fast-food restaurant or standing outside a bank while his rider was inside doing business.

My neighbors began to see what these mustangs were all about, and I often volunteered to go to the Ridgecrest Corrals and help pick out mustangs for new adopters.

I started taking my mustangs on the Posse's annual Mojave Trail Ride, which goes about 155 miles in six days. It was during these rides that people would look at my mustang and see how well he adapted to these rides. During one of these rides, I took along an extra mustang for the drag rider. He was purchased after the trip by a lady on the trail ride that rode an Arab. Since that day, she has only ridden Kiowa, and became a true believer in mustangs.

Morgan, my first Mustang, was sold to my partner on the Mounted Unit, and was used as a Mounted Police horse after that. We still have Homer, who at 21 years old, made the Mojave trail ride as the drag horse, and worked harder than any of his counterparts on the trip. Homer is still used as my Mounted Posse Horse.

In November 2004, I adopted another trained mustang from Colorado. Dot made the Mojave Trail ride at four years of age and served as a representative of his breed on that ride. He did so well, that my best friend purchased a mustang out of Nevada to use on the trail ride as well.

All I can say to anybody that adopts one, once you do, you will have the most loyal, and best friend that you will ever have. As for me, I am going to continue to promote these mustangs as much as I can. They are truly America's Horse.



*Doug Gorman with a mustang pinto he halter-trained as part of the California Volunteer Pilot Project for adoption at one of the Ridgecrest, CA Corral Adoptions.*

---

[Top of page](#)

## Article Links

[Bella and Me](#)

[It's All in the Eye](#)

[BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off](#)

[Daniel and Dodger](#)

[Gene Glasscock Finishes His Journey](#)

[The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States](#)

[Moving Further](#)

[New York's "Mustang Lady"](#)

[My Mustang History](#)

[Sunny](#)

[Wild Horse Slated for Home In Austrailia](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[HOME](#)

## Sunny

By Tom Brueckner

Colorado Wild Horse and Burro Adopter



I read in the *Back Country Horsemen of America* magazine that you were looking for updates on BLM adopted horses. Here's my update. I adopted the now-4-year-old gelding named Sunny last November from Canon City Prison Training Facility, green-broke from the Inmate Program. Sunny is originally from Wyoming. My wife and I belong to the local SAR (Search and Rescue) groups, mounted and not mounted.

As such, I have been training him for riding and packing missions. Sunny is by far the most sure-footed horse in the high country for his age compared to all the domestic horses (mostly Quarter Horses) I have owned so far.

We live in Durango, the southwestern part of Colorado, where 90 percent of all rescue missions are in steep and rocky terrain. Since Sunny is still a very young horse, I have not used him on actual high-country rescues yet, but I have used him on plenty of trainings where he did wonderfully.

We are also in the process of continuing his training and education as a scenting horse (just like scenting K9s).

Sunny and I went to a scenting clinic this past April, and I am proud to say that he did best of all the horses; that is probably part because of my preparation for the clinic, as well as Sunny's upbringing in the wild. According to the clinician, mustang horses do consistently well during scenting classes.



*Sunny, the talented mustang with nose sense.*

My wife and I look forward to being able to use Sunny on search-and-rescue missions. It's such an important job, and it only helps to have an animal as talented as a mustang on the trail.

[Top of page](#)

## Article Links

[Bella and Me](#)

[It's All in the Eye](#)

[BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off](#)

[Daniel and Dodger](#)

[Gene Glasscock Finishes His Journey](#)

[The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States](#)

[Moving Further](#)

[New York's "Mustang Lady"](#)

[My Mustang History](#)

[Sunny](#)

[Wild Horse Slated for Home In Austrailia](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[HOME](#)

# Wild Horse Slated for Home in Austrailia

By Janet Neal,

WH&B Public Outreach Coordinator,

BLM National Marketing Team



At a recent adoption in Ridgecrest, California, Valerie Harris, from San Miguel, adopted a three-year-old mustang mare for her friend Debra Cown-Hacket. Debra lives in Cockatoo, Victoria, Australia.

The mustang, named Whisper, will be kept in Valerie's care in California until title is passed. Debra will be coming to the United States throughout the year to attend several training courses from a well-known horse trainer as well as training certification before she takes Whisper home to Australia.

After receiving title, the horse will be placed in U.S. quarantine, fly to Australia, and be placed in Australia quarantine before heading to her new home in Cockatoo. According to Debra, this will be the first mustang to be imported into Australia at a cost of over \$11,000 just for the plane ticket. Whisper will even have her own personal flight attendant!



*Whisper, one of America's Living Legends, will have a new home in Australia.*

[Top of page](#)

## Article Links

[Bella and Me](#)

[It's All in the Eye](#)

[BLM California Volunteer Program Takes Off](#)

[Daniel and Dodger](#)

[Gene Glasscock Finishes His Journey](#)

[The "Living Legends" Living Large in Eastern States](#)

[Moving Further](#)

[New York's "Mustang Lady"](#)

[My Mustang History](#)

[Sunny](#)

[Wild Horse Slated for Home in Australia](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[HOME](#)

## Mustang and Burro Testimonials



I've been in love with wild horses since I first read Marguerite Henry's book, *Mustang, Wild Spirit of the West*. I grew up a horse-crazy little girl, like so many of us, but didn't have my own horses until I was an adult. When I heard the stories of Wild Horse Annie, and the passing of the Federal bill to protect wild horses and burros in 1971, I knew I wanted to have one of these horses in my life! I didn't own a truck and trailer then, so I had to let it go for awhile! I kept dreaming of owning my own wild horse and had to comfort myself by riding a lot of other people's horses! Then in April of 1986, a couple of months before my wedding, I talked my fiancée into going to the L.A. Equestrian Center in Burbank, CA to "just look" at the wild horses and burros! Oh, My! I went home with a list of about 15 horses that just fit the bill! I ended up adopting a 2-year old filly and today, almost 20 years later, she is my best buddy, trail companion and the most sure-footed, all-around talented horse around and I still have my husband, too! In about 1993, I adopted a just-weaned jack burro, Diego, from the Ridgecrest, CA corrals and he was absolutely the biggest character and best "lawn ornament" - really just a big dog. I loved him so much. It broke my heart to have to put him down 2 years ago. Someday I'll have another burro!

Becky

---

When I rode endurance in California back in the 70s & 80s, I knew several people riding mustangs and I was impressed with them. My brother-in-law and nephews had adopted a couple of them too and were real happy with them as overall riding horses. When we moved to New Mexico, we wanted horses ideally suited to our environment and mustangs seemed perfect for that. There was also the attraction of getting a horse completely undamaged by people and the domestic environment.

Carmon & Mike

---

My reason for adopting a burro was pretty simple; the love of the animal and to give back just a little of what the 4-legged animals in my life had given to me. I perhaps adopted sooner than I'd expected though. After viewing the BLM burros at Red Bluff, CA (I'd been on-line looking for some time) I just could not let the one remaining burro go back to the Litchfield Corrals near Susanville, CA. I had to bring him home. Since then I've learned that he also was 'unadopted' at an adoption held in Stockton, CA. I believe in kismet....and he was just supposed to come home with me. It took about a total of 2 seconds to absolutely fall in love. Everyday I tell "Darrell" that he's a lucky boy and how much I love him! What I have learned is that the burros are gentle and loving and giving. At least for Darrell - trust came very quickly and I just find that amazing knowing where he came from and how he must have lived. Darrell is a 4 year old jack. What joy he gave me when he 'brayed' for the first time when I visited, and the quiet nickers he gives me just because he's happy to see me. When I first thought of adopting a BLM burro, it was just to give one a home. However, I hope to give my little giant a job. I'm planning to pack him and go into God's land when I need some R&R. Until then, he's happy, I'm happy... and I wish every BLM adoptee would find a home.

Ruthanne

---

I met my first mustang in 1977, when I was still a teen. From the moment she allowed me to touch her for the first time (the first person besides her adopter that she allowed to touch her) I had it in my head that I wanted to adopt one someday. This same filly turned out to be such an awesome, smart, sensible (and pretty, too) all-around horse, that it only helped to solidify that desire. Last time I saw this mare, she was

almost 20 years old and still great.

I've worked with all kinds of horses over the years, many of them rescues or abused. I wanted a chance to work with an "unspoiled" horse; a clean slate, so I adopted a mustang. A mustang is like no other horse I've ever known and I'm hooked for life.

Sandy

---

Back in the 80's, I was invited to an adoption taking place in Burbank. I visited not knowing anything about wild horses and burros. I just went to take a look and fell in LOVE with what I saw. I grew up around very expensive dressage and hunter/jumper horses. I rode many breeds as a child. But nothing spoke to my heart and soul the way these mustangs did that day at that adoption. Their eyes tell a story. Their heart and intelligence also shows in the look they have.

I was not able to adopt at that time. I was a single Mom, 20 years old, living in an apartment, but I knew that one day, I'd have mustangs. Over the years, I would drive to adoptions and just sit by the corrals and watch the horses anticipating the day one could come home with me.

Many years passed, and in 2003 my husband and I purchased land and I got my first mustang, a bay gelding named Reno. Reno confirmed what I had believed mustangs were all about; intelligent, kind, strong, loyal and noble.

My husband who thought horses were "just big dumb animals" has been won over by Reno. Now my husband teaches other people about mustangs. Mike respects these animals.

We have just recently adopted a Salt Wells filly (Bailey) and an 8 month old burro (Jed).

Never did I imagine that these wonderful animals would bring my family so much joy. With so much historical value they have made my family very proud to do our little part in educating folks to the majestic ways of these wild horses and burros. When given the opportunity we have found that mustangs with their natural outer and inner beauty often speak for themselves.

I am grateful to BLM for allowing us the opportunity to be a part of history, and for the concern and care they show for these animals!

Kate

---

I adopted a mustang because I was just captivated by the horses that would come to adoption events held in my local area; their spirit, their raw beauty, their history; a romantic thing. I was attracted to the idea of learning to communicate with such a majestic animal and earn its trust and train it.

Nancy

---

I don't seek out domestics anymore. Most of them that come this way are horribly messed up. A domestic horse that has not been properly trained is a lot harder to re-train and fix the problems than a fresh off-the-range wild horse. The trained horses are pricey, too. Generally, unless someone has fallen on hard times, or their child outgrew the horse, it has become obvious to me that the domestic horses people sell are generally their "problem child."

My husband and I have adopted several mustangs and burros over the years since we first adopted in 1977. We've rescued several, too and found them good adoptive homes. We use our mustangs and burros for trail riding, driving, packing, and just plain old lovable pets. Adopting mustangs and training them gives us a great sense of accomplishment.

Ginny

---